



United States Department of Agriculture  
Rural Development

Virginia State Office

August 30, 2006

**SUBJECT:** Public Information, Media Contact and Marketing Plan

**TO:** Area Directors  
Rural Development Managers  
Rural Development, Virginia

**PURPOSE/INTENDED OUTCOME:**

The purpose of this Administrative Notice (AN) is to provide updated information relating to the continued responsibility of field staff to conduct a public relations and marketing effort within their service areas. Additionally, this AN will outline the requirements for completing a marketing/outreach plan.

**COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS AN:**

This AN replaces VA AN No. 450 (2015) dated July 19, 2005.

**IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Each Director (Area and Program) and Manager with Rural Development has a responsibility to provide a public relations and marketing effort which positively identifies Rural Development programs within their service area. This responsibility is outlined within each Director's and Manager's performance requirements.

Marketing of Rural Development programs and outreach to the rural communities, including the underserved groups, is of the utmost importance to providing a balanced delivery within each field office.

**EXPIRATION DATE:** August 30, 2007

**FILING INSTRUCTIONS:** File  
Preceding RD Instruction 2015-B

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Marketing and outreach is defined as any special activity where Rural Development Programs are disseminated to a group or an individual that represents a group, for the purpose of increasing activity and participation in that particular Rural Development Program.

The following are examples of marketing and outreach:

- If a telephone or conference call was held for the express purpose of explaining the programs to a group or an individual that represents a group.
- Group meetings to offer technical assistance or information are considered outreach.
- Any printed publications explaining the programs and/or any special initiatives that will be undertaken by the agency. This includes newspaper articles and new releases.
- Participation in events i.e., housing conferences, job fairs, etc. (Displays are available both in each Area and here in the State Office, along with handout material. If a nominal fee is required to display at these events, this can be paid by the agency with prior approval).

The following activities are not considered outreach efforts:

- After an application for a group or individual loan/grant has been received, continued contact to process and service the loan/grant are considered program delivery, not outreach.

### **Marketing/Outreach Plan**

The agency will have written marketing/outreach plans for each level in the state (state programs, area office, and the local office). However, Area Offices can include their local offices in their Marketing/Outreach Plan, thus only one plan will be necessary per Area Office.

**The plans will be updated for the changing needs and goals of the organization and to provide correct current media contact information for each area at the beginning of the fiscal year, based on the initiatives set forth by National Directives and the State Director.** The plans will be sent to both the State Civil Rights Coordinator (SCRC) and Public Information Coordinator (PIC) for review and approval.

Area Directors shall work with their Rural Development Managers and provide the Marketing/Outreach Plan to the State Office for review **no later than October 30, 2006.**

In an effort to reach the under-served groups, strategies should be outlined in your Marketing/Outreach Plan to show how each area will accomplish this task.

The following would be considered targeted groups: Minorities, Native Americans, Small Limited Resource Farmers and Women Farmers, Specialty Producers, Small Minority and Women Owned Businesses and Persons with Disabilities.

The plans will include the following components:

### **Area Office/Local Office**

- Mission Statement
- Measurable goals/Objectives of the plan
- Coverage area – counties associated with the office, population breakdown of each county, general information on the county (i.e., median household income, geographic location, major industries)
- Team members assisting in the outreach efforts
- Resource requirements – funding requirements, presentation materials, and proposed hours dedicated to outreach
- List of partnering associations, agencies (federal, state, local and private) that the agency coordinates with to accomplish outreach
- List of media sources that are used in the service area.
- List the current name, phone numbers, FAX numbers and any email addresses of media sources in your service area.

### **Reporting Activity**

Each Director and/or Manager shall document their public contacts by completing and submitting Exhibit A of this AN to the attention of Vern Orrell, the State PIC, attaching legible copies of news articles or other applicable marketing material. Please submit only one Exhibit A per contact or meeting. These Exhibits will be retained in the State Office and can be utilized for performance ratings as needed.

Outreach conducted in connection with the Faith-Based and Community Initiative (FBCI) is to be reported to Barbara Hodges, FBCI Coordinator, by the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month, so that she may complete her consolidated report to the National FBCI Coordinator. All Area Directors and Program Directors are to complete and send Exhibit B of this AN so that it is received by the specified deadline. Negative reports are required.

In addition to submitting Exhibit A or B, each field office will report the accomplishments of the outreach efforts on an annual basis to their Area Director, in a cumulative report from that specific area. The information should be evaluated to determine what worked and what did not work. (Suggestions: applications can be initialed with a number code in the corner of the application corresponding to the numbered event (i.e., outreach effort #1, outreach effort #2). This will help you keep track of what is working for statistical purposes. The information that is gathered will be the foundation for modifying the Marketing/Outreach plan in subsequent years. Activities that are very productive can be shared with other offices and activities that are not as productive can be examined or ceased. The report will be due on September 30 of each FY from each Area Director.

### **Press Releases**

When press releases for funding or updates to Rural Development programs are announced, these releases are provided to the field staff from either the PIC and/or your Area Director to be sent to local media contacts in hopes of publication.

In carrying out your public information marketing and outreach responsibilities, it is realized that not all press releases will be printed/published by the media in your service area. However, your efforts of providing this information to and establishing a relationship with your local media is what is important. We strongly encourage you to arrange a personal visit with your local media sources on at least an annual basis in order to establish and maintain a rapport with the representatives, thus increasing the likelihood for publication of your news releases.

### **Other Marketing Tools**

In addition to the normal press releases, if you have a special human interest story from your service area that you feel may make a good public relations article, please contact the State PIC, Vern Orrell and he can assist in development of the story for your area media sources.

Special emphasis should be placed on annual marketing events, such as Earth Day in April and National Home Ownership Month in June, to showcase our programs to the rural community.

Let us continue to provide Virginia with a positive public image of Rural Development programs and fully develop our contacts with the media so that our stories of all the good, quality-of-life improving efforts that each of you make happen everyday can be told and heard. It is essential that we share our successes with the public we are striving to serve.

If you have any questions concerning this AN, please contact [Vern.Orrell@va.usda.gov](mailto:Vern.Orrell@va.usda.gov) (PIC) in the State Office at ext. 1590 or [Barbara.Hodges@va.usda.gov](mailto:Barbara.Hodges@va.usda.gov) (FBCI) in the State Office at ext. 1601.

/s/ Ellen Matthews Davis  
ELLEN MATTHEWS DAVIS  
State Director

Attachments

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Office Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Type of Contact:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Examples:** Newspaper, Radio, Outreach Visit, Other

**Describe Contact:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Example:** Press Release on funding printed in October 12<sup>th</sup> issue of Rural Times

**Newspaper:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please list name of media outlet:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of attendees if an outreach visit was involved:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Was a special group targeted:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Examples:** Minority group, women owned business, faith-based group, etc.

**Other Comments:**

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**If a newspaper article was generated, please attach and send to PIC.**

## **Faith-Based and Community Initiatives**

**1. Public Outreach/Technical Assistance Report: Office:**  
**State:**

**2A. Type of Activity:**

**2B. Participant Involvement:**                      **2C. Equal Treatment Education:**

**3. Date of Outreach:**

**4. Organization(s)/Entity contacted:**  
**Address:**  
**Faith-Based**  
**Community Based**                      **Ph:**  
**Email:**

**5. Number of Attendees:**

**6. RD employee(s) position that performed outreach:**

**7. Program(s) Covered:**

**8A. Type of Outreach:**    **Meeting**                      **TV Interview/Show**  
   **Mailing**                      **Radio Interview/Show**

**8B. Was there media coverage of the outreach event: Yes              No**  
**If "Yes", type of media: Newspaper              TV              Radio**

**9. Was the outreach to a special emphasis group:**  
**Minority**                      **Elderly**  
**Women**                      **Children**  
**Disabled**                      **Veterans**

**10. Comments/Additional Information:**

## Faith Based and Community Initiatives Public Outreach Report Form Instructions:

- 1 **Office: Name of Office**  
**State: State where outreach completed**
- 2 **A. Type of Activity: Select one type based on the following definitions:**
- 1 Technical Assistance Workshops-Outreach activities or events that includes detailed instructions on RD Program application processes for participation in the loan/grant program.
- 2 Other Outreach-May include less technical "hands-on" speeches or presentations, articles in Faith-Based or Community Organization newsletters or other publications, email "blasts", or FBCI White House Conferences.
- 3 Interagency Conferences-RD participation in any outreach activity or event with other Federal, State or local government Agency.
- 4 Mentoring Relationship-Mentoring to develop partnerships via phone, email, one-on-one contact, etc.
- 5 Other-Please Describe
- B. Participant Involvement: Select one or more as applicable to the event**
- C. Equal Treatment Education: Select one or more as applicable. Was the Equal Treatment Rule, Talking Points Discussed? Did you incorporate The Equal Treatment Rule or Talking Points into an Agency newsletter or provide to an organization to incorporate into their newsletter?**
- 3 **Date of Outreach: Insert date**
- 4 **Organization/Entity contacted: Insert name and contact information**  
**If group meeting, attach sign in sheet.**  
**Faith Based**  
**Community Based: Check applicable box or boxes.**
- 5 **Number of Attendees: Insert number**
- 6 **RD employee(s)/position that performed the outreach: Insert name/title**
- 7 **Program (s) Covered: Check one or more as per presentation/discussion**
- 8 **A. Type of Outreach: Check one**  
**B. Media Coverage: Check one. If yes, check type of media**

- 9 Was the outreach to a special emphasis group: Check all that apply.**

**NOTE: An organization whose mission routinely serves the Hispanic Community would be considered minority; an organization whose mission routinely serves disabled veterans, i/e/ Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association would serve disabled persons and veterans and both would be checked.**

- 10 Comments/Additional Information: Provide details of outreach (this will require adding a second page for comments)**